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LONDON LETTER

August 7, 1918.

The first week of this month was devoted by Sotheby's to the dispersal of the seventh portion of the Huth Collection. Many American bidders made their appearance in the salesrooms to secure a portion of the famous library and one of the most important items, Caxton's "Royal Book" of 1487, which came to Mr. Huth from the Cambridge University Library in exchange for another rarity, went to Mr. G. D. Smith of New York for £1,800. Prices on the whole ruled exceedingly high, though as regards that portion of the library which was of particular Teutonic interest, the total would doubtless have been larger, had the enemy powers been represented.

War Prolongs "The Season"

Now that the goings and comings of so many are controlled by the furlough of men at the front, and such numbers of people establish themselves at unaccustomed times in London in order to be with their soldierfolk, the London season stretches far beyond its formerly appointed limits. Hence, there are several interesting shows in town at a time when in the ordinary way there would have been "nothing doing." One of the exhibitions which should not be missed is that of the watercolors of Charles John Collings and N. H. Baird at the Carroll Gallery. It is interesting to have an opportunity of studying the works of the two artists at the same time, since the art of Baird had an undoubted influence in the development of Collings' genius, individual though it is. The rustic scenes of which Baird was so fond, and of which he possessed so intimate an understanding, have all the insight and emotion of a poet, his horses, ploughing and harrowing fields, are something more than mere studies of animal life—they are sentient beings, but little removed from the men who lead and guide them. His fine sense of color conveys an emotional atmosphere which transforms each little study into a poem in paint. In addition to a number of early works by Collings (in which, by the way, the lapse of 20 years and more, has effected no loss in tone), there are 25 landscapes and panels representing scenes in the Canadian Rockies. Collings is a painter who is becoming more and more appreciated in England. His work is now commanding high prices and has a steadily extending circle of admirers.

At the Goupil Gallery the Judge Evans collection of modern art is being exhibited prior to its dispersal. It is seldom that a collector has the courage to purchase so lavishly of men who have, as it were, still to establish their reputations as masters. That he purchased with rare discernment is evidenced by the fact that the collection contains works by the men who have since made their mark in the world of art, though at the time that Judge Evans deemed them worthy of encouragement, they had by no means as yet "arrived." And so we find here interesting, if somewhat immature examples of the art of Augustus John, Wilson Steer Orpen, Conder, and many a one who has since "made good" and justified the confidence placed in his powers by this patron of the arts. The Slade School draughtsmen and members of the New English Art Club and the International Society are liberally represented.

The New Collector

The newer type of collector to which the war has given rise is occasioning not a little worry to the dealers. An amusing experience was lately related to me by one of the latter, whose galleries had recently been invaded by a lady who asked vaguely to be shown an "antique" chest of drawers. On examining the Jacobean example to which notice was directed, she proceeded to pull out one of the drawers and to point out that there were evidences of its having been used. Unconvinced that such a state of affairs was but natural in the case of a piece of furniture of so great an age, she complained bitterly that she had asked to see antique furniture, not second hand! She would certainly not dream of buying for her new house furniture which had been used by someone else!!

I also heard, not long ago, of a lady who displayed with much pride a cream jug which she had had made for her out of the silver of an antique salver, specially melted down for the purpose. She could not find an old cream jug of the pattern she desired and thought that by using a bit of really old silver to form one, she would be effecting the right thing!

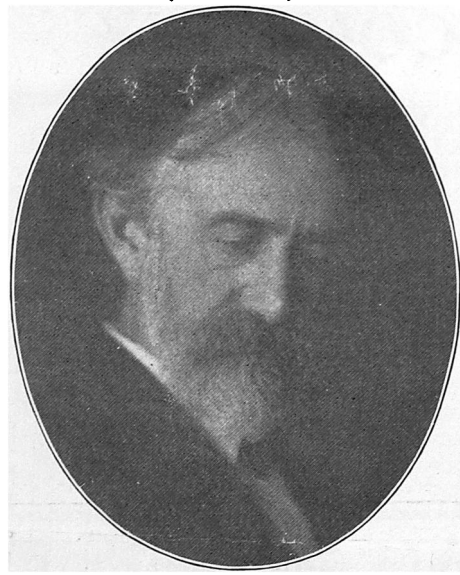
A Burne-Jones Brings \$7,875

At a recent sale at Christie's, London, Burne-Jones' picture, "The Tree of Forgiveness," exhibited at the new gallery in 1898, brought £1,575, or \$7,875.

Peter Graham's "O'er Moss and Moorland," 1867, for 430 guineas (Peacock); T. S. Cooper's "Cattle Coming Down to a Stream," 1886, 330 guineas (Shoebridge); and W. Dendy Sadler's "Village Gossips," 410 guineas (Shoebridge).

OBITUARY

(Continued)



J. C. Nicoll

James Craig Nicoll, a well known artist, and president of the American Water Color Society, of which he was the founder, and formerly secretary of the National Academy of Design, died on July 26 at Norwalk, Conn., in the 71st year of his age. The artist was noted for his watercolors and marine paintings, and also executed many high class etchings. He was born in New York City, Nov. 22, 1847, a son of William Nicoll and Elizabeth Craig Nicoll. He was educated at the Quackenbos School, and during the greater part of his career lived in New York, although he often visited other parts of the country, and much of his work was accomplished on these trips.

He studied for two years at the studio of M. F. H. de Haas, and sketched with De Haas, Kruseman and Van Elten.

His work has been exhibited throughout the United States and in Paris, and he received medals at exhibitions in New York, Boston, New Orleans and other cities.

The most noteworthy of his works in oils are probably "Sunlight on the Sea," "Smugglers' Landing Place," "Sunset, Bay of Fundy," and "The Cliffs at Nahant."

His watercolors "On the St. Lawrence" and "Shower on the Coast" were exhibited at the Paris Exposition of 1878. In 1876 "Foggy Morning, Grand Menan" was shown at the Philadelphia Exposition. Other watercolors are "Moonlight, Cape Ann," "Evening After a Gale" and "Schroon Lake."

Mr. Nicoll became a member of the National Academy in 1885. He was for ten years Secretary of the American Water Color Society, and in 1874 became a member of the Artists' Fund Society, an organization of which he was once the president. He was a life member of the National Academy of Design, and was an officer or member of nearly all the leading art organizations in New York City.

Mr. Nicoll married Miss Cora A. Noble in this city in 1873. She died several years ago. He leaves two sons and two daughters.

Frank Craig

The death of Frank Craig, a well known English artist, has been announced at Lisbon. Mr. Craig was born in 1874. He was educated at the Merchant Taylors' School, and studied art at Cook's Life Class, the Lambeth School of Art and at the Royal Academy Schools. He first became known as an illustrator when his work appeared in the "Graphic," London, and in American magazines. The state of his health compelled him to leave London later and he confined himself mainly to painting, in which art he was considerably influenced by the subjects and style of the late Edwin A. Abbey.

One of his pictures, "The Heretic," was purchased for the Chantrey Bequest, and "The Maid" was bought by the French Government for the Luxembourg Museum, Paris, while other works of his are to be found in various Dominion galleries and government buildings. He was awarded medals in Paris, Barcelona and America, and in June last a collection of his paintings and drawings was exhibited in Lisbon under the auspices of the Sociedade Nacional das Belles Artes, where they won high favor, one of the black-and-white drawings having been purchased for the Portuguese National Museum.

Calvin Rae Smith

Calvin Rae Smith, formerly professor of art at the College of the City of New York, died Aug. 8 at the home of his sister, Mrs. Louise Draper, 466 Westminster Road, Brooklyn.

He was born in Manhattan and educated as an artist in this country and Paris, France. For years he was an exhibitor of landscape and portrait paintings, and was a member of the Salmagundi Club.

Max Rosenthal

The death of Max Rosenthal, an artist noted for his historic portraits, occurred August 8 at Philadelphia. He was born Nov. 23, 1833, in Russian Poland, and came to the United States in 1849. He introduced the use of chromo-lithography, and received a medal from the Franklin Institute. He was a fellow of the Royal Academy of England, and in the Civil War followed the army of the Potomac and made numerous sketches for the U. S. Military Commission.

Mr. Rosenthal began etching in 1880, and made many historic portraits. In 1890 he turned his attention to mezzotints and made life-size heads of Daniel Webster, Washington and others. In recent years he devoted his time to painting, and in 1904 he completed an important work, "Jesus at Prayer." The artist won many medals.

L. P. Smythe, R. A.

L. P. Smythe, R. A., the well known Royal Academician, died last month at Honvault, Wimereux, Pas de Calais.

Lionel Percy Smythe was born in 1840 and was educated at King's College School. It is stated that during the early part of his career he was to some extent eclipsed by the real merit of his more precocious half-brother, W. L. Wylie, of whom his father was wont proudly to say that he was "twenty and painted like a man of fifty." The same could not be said of Smythe, and although his pictures were rarely rejected by the Academy, they were often skied. In 1884 he produced one of his finest works, "The Field of the Cloth of Gold." It heads a series celebrating the pageantry of harvest.

Richard Norton

The death of Professor Richard Norton, educator and archaeologist, is announced in Paris. He was head of the American Volunteer Motor Ambulance Corps, which served on the French front from 1914 to 1917.

Richard Norton was born in Dresden, Germany, Feb. 9, 1872, a son of Professor Charles Eliot Norton of Harvard and Susan Sedgewick Norton. He was graduated from Harvard in 1892, and studied afterward in Germany and at the American School of Classical Studies, Athens. He was a director of the American School of Classical Studies at Rome from 1899 to 1907. He visited Central Asia for the purpose of archaeological investigation in 1903, and the Cyrenaica in 1904 and 1909.

He was Director of the Archaeological Institute of America and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts expedition to excavate the ruins of Cyrene in 1910 and 1911.

Lemuel Everett Wilmarth

Lemuel Everett Wilmarth, an artist who was for twenty years in charge of the schools of the National Academy of Design in Manhattan, died July 27 at his residence, 352 Adelphi St., Brooklyn. He was 82 years old. Mr. Wilmarth studied drawing at the Pa. Academy of Fine Arts in Phila. He then went abroad, where he studied at the Royal Academy at Munich and at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. He was one of the founders of the "New Earth," a Swedenborgian publication, of which he was the editor for several years, and was a prominent member of the Swedenborgian Church in Brooklyn. His best known pictures are "The Pick of the Orchard," "Left in Charge," "Ingratitude," and "Sunny Italy."

Gustave Kobbe

Gustav Kobbe, art critic of the New York Herald, was killed instantly July 27 by a naval hydro-aeroplane while he was sailing a small boat off Bay Shore, L. I.

Mr. Kobbe was sixty-two years old, and had been spending the summer with his daughter, Mrs. Gerald V. Hollins of Brightwaters, L. I. He was born in this city and was the son of William August Kobbe. His mother was Sarah Lord of New London, Conn.

He was graduated from Columbia University in 1879. In 1882 he married Caroline Wheeler of Scarsdale, N. Y.

I. E. Repin

Repin, the greatest Russian painter of the old school, is dead, according to a dispatch from Berene to London.

The famous painter was a friend of Tolstoi, and occupied a foremost place as a portraitist. He died from starvation in the small town of Kuokkala, on the frontier of Finland.

Ilya Efimovitch Repin was unquestionably the greatest Russian painter of his day. He was born nearly eighty years ago in a Russian village, of humble parents. The artist was self-educated, and by sheer force of his genius gained an eminent position in the art world while still a young man.

He was perhaps best known as a portrait painter, but he achieved considerable fame and popularity through his historical paintings. Like Tolstoi, he was a vegetarian, and lived a simple life in Finland, just beyond the Russian border.

PARIS LETTER

Paris, August, 1918.

The "Salon" in war-time? No, not precisely that. An exhibition, currently referred to as "the Salon," is being held, under the patronage of the city of Paris, for the joint benefit of the war charities of the "Société des Artistes Français" and the "Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts" ("Artistes Française" and "Nationale," for short), the two big organizations, which, before the war, were accustomed to hold the annual Salons.

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"Salon" in the strict, traditional sense of the term, then, this exhibition is not. Still, "Salon," for convenience' sake, let it be, since there seems to be no other single word wherewith to designate it; but condensed Salon, abridged Salon, Salon in miniature, so to speak, Salon in perfect harmony with the limitation imposed by circumstances upon practically every branch of activity that is not absolutely indispensable to the winning of the war; in short "Salon de restrictions," as the Parisians would put it.

In a New Home

The location has been changed from the Grand Palais (the home of the Salons ever since its construction in 1900, but now a colossal military hospital) to the Petit Palais, normally consecrated to the most precious permanent collections of the city of Paris, but latterly almost empty, owing to the removal of said collections to places of safety. And this change of site, involving a notable diminution of space, has necessitated a corresponding change in the nature of the exhibits. The number of pieces of all sorts exposed is only a trifle over 1,000, as against 8,000-9,000 (6,000 in the "Artistes Français" alone) in an ordinary year, while the maximum permitted dimensions of a painting (frame included) is only two metres and a half (about eight feet) square, as against six metres square. This means that the joint Salon of 1918 is scarcely more than a tenth of the size of the two normal Salons.

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Furthermore, there are no prizes or other honors, no fêtes, no vocal or instrumental concerts, no lectures, no rest rooms, no buffet, no greenery to set off the sculpture, no hangings and divans to serve as advertisements for the department stores. Even the catalogue has been compressed (in consequence of the dearth and scarcity of paper) to the simplest sort of a thin pamphlet list by suppressing the statutes, regulations, membership rolls and biographical data which made of it a bulky volume.

War Salon and Art of the Future

To the inevitable question: Does the War Salon demonstrate that the war is revolutionizing art expression in France? one replies unhesitatingly in the negative. It is impossible to draw therefrom the slightest conclusion or even inference regarding the influence of the cataclysm in which France has been involved from the outset upon the sensibilities of the Frenchmen whose function it is to interpret the external world. But it must.

It should be borne in mind that practically all the younger and, presumably, more progressive members and a goodly portion of even the middle-aged members of the "Artistes Français" and the "Nationale" have been absorbed during the last four years with more important and glorious tasks than painting and sculpturing. It should further be borne in mind that both these societies have been crystallized so long that it is not to them one would look for revelations of new tendencies, but to the freer and more flexible, if sometimes erratic, Salon d'Automne, to the incoherent but aggressive Salon des Independents, to the divers small coteries and individuals who hold themselves aloof from all these organizations, and to the art student who, mobilized as little more than boys, will emerge from the ordeal as men. When these artists, now in the fiery furnace, shall have returned to their studios and their palettes, will be time enough to cast about for evidence of the evolution of new methods and new formulas. Already, in the regular output of a brilliant group of dessinateurs and in a dozen small exhibitions (to some of which the Transcript has called attention) a wealth of work has been displayed that is inspiring and inspiring if not precisely prophetic.

And what a superb gesture of contemptuous defiance!

The holding of a salon under air raids and super-cannon bombardments—"Big Bertha" thundered the very day of the "Vernissage"—while the invader is closer to the capital than at any time since August, 1914, is irrefutable proof that the war spirit of the Parisians is as indomitable as that of the poilus and a stinging retort to the imputations from Berlin that the Ville Lumière is in a state of hopeless anarchy and chaos.

—Alvar P. Sanborn in Boston Transcript.